

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claim 31 has been cancelled. Accordingly, claims 1-6, 8-17, 22-30, and 32-35 are pending in this application. No new matter has been introduced by this Amendment.

Initially, Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 1-6, 8-17, 22-30, and 32-35. In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,090,258, to Yamasaki et al. This rejection is rendered moot by the cancellation of independent claim 31. In view of this, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-6, 8-17, 22-30, and 32-25 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed cancellation of claim 31 does not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the final Office Action presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicants' invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the Amendment would allow Applicants to reply to the final rejection and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants submit that entry of the Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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